

In Claim 188, line 1, please insert ~~--shear-thinnable--~~ before "polymer composition".

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed by Examiner Jerry Lorengo on May 26, 1999, has been received and reviewed. In order to expedite prosecution, Applicant has amended claims 1, 133 and 188 without prejudice. No new matter has been added. No fees are believed due. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the amended subject matter in this or in any other application. The amendment of these claims makes no admission regarding the patentability of this subject matter. Applicant respectfully submits that these amendments should not be construed as limiting the appropriate scope of protection provided under the doctrine of equivalents. In view of the amendments above and the detailed remarks presented herein, favorable reconsideration of the application and approval for allowance is respectfully requested.

Please note that the parent application, covering the method, has issued as U.S. Patent No. 5,876,792 on March 2, 1999. Moreover, please note that the PTO has allowed and issued other U.S. Patents to the Applicant after having an opportunity to review the cited references of this office action, such as in U.S. Patent No. 5,209,965 issued May 11, 1993 and U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/476,465, allowed December 29, 1997.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

(1)

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 133-140, 143-144, 146-154, 160-165, 167-172, 179-183, 185 and 188-197 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Caldwell et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 3265529) in view of Billmeyer, Jr. (reference article).

The primary reference to Caldwell was said to teach a method and apparatus for the placement of a polymer (water swellable elastomer) into a porous (breathable fabric) web. The Examiner admitted that the primary reference fails to teach that the polymer is shear thinned upon application with the knife to substantially reduce its viscosity.